<u>PAST THE LAST MOUNTAIN #1</u>
By Paul Allor
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<u>CHARACTERS</u>
We're switching between two sets of characters here – the fantasy creatures who are on the run, and the humans who are pursuing them:

HUMANS

NEIL:	**The new director of a penal colony for fantasy creatures (where they've lived since their war with the humans ended). He's a decent guy who thinks that he's working to create a better future for his son. But he's in way, way over his head with this new job.**
TREVOR:	**The penal colony's head zoologist. He understands these creatures better than anyone else. <u>Way</u> better than Neil. He tends to be a bit aloof, and does his own thing rather than following the rules.**
MEL:	**A female guard at the penal colony. Unlike Neil and Trevor, she's not ideological, and this isn't a calling for her. It's a way to put food on the table. She's pragmatic above all else.**

CREATURES

TROLL (SIMON):	**A young troll boy who's just suffered a tragic loss. He's emotional, temperamental, quick to anger. But he's also determined to reach safety and start a new life. (Note: He is <u>not</u> the full-grown troll we see on page one).**
DRAGON (WILLA):	**A female dragon. Apparently wise and Zen-like, but with a deep and roiling anger. She brings balance to the group, and becomes a surrogate mother to Troll. She desperately wants to believe that a mythical "safe place" really does exist.**
FAUN (KATE):	**A female faun. She's tough, and a little cynical. Kind of a jerk, frankly. But the group wouldn't survive without her. She make the decisions others won't, and constantly pushes them forward.**

<u>PAGE ONE – THREE PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
An establishing shot of mountainous terrain, out west.

PANEL TWO
But down in a clearing, a TEN-FOOT-TALL female Troll is SMASHING up a four-lane rural highway. Behind her, off the highway, is a smashed-up barrier fence. A huge, electrified fence (think of the ones in Jurassic Park).

Cars are screeching to avoid the terrible beast.

PANEL THREE
Straight on shot of the Troll, looking out at the reader, its face twisted in rage as it lets loose a terrifying scream.

1. TROLL: RRRAAAAAA!

PAGE TWO – SIX PANELS

PANEL ONE
An establishing shot of a small house on a sunny, tree-lined street.

1. NEIL (OP): Oh, calm down. It's time for breakfast.

PANEL TWO
Inside the kitchen. BUDDY, three years old, is sitting before a bowl of oatmeal. He's holding a spoonful, and is frowning at it doubtfully. NEIL, around 40, dressed in a suit and tie, is leaning down, talking to him.

2. NEIL: If you don't eat your oatmeal the **goblins** will get you! Their little fingers will creep into your brain and –

PANEL THREE
A wider shot of the kitchen. Neil's wife STACY is sitting across the table. She looks up, absolutely horrified.

3. STACY: Neil! How could you even **joke** about that?

4. NEIL: Ah, come on. He's three. He can take it.

PANEL FOUR
Neil leans in and ruffles Buddy's hair.

5. NEIL: Don't worry, Buddy. There are no goblins running around.

6. NEIL: That war ended a long time ago.

PANEL FIVE
Neil has stood up, his briefcase still on the table. He motions towards himself.

7. NEIL: More importantly… how do I look?

PANEL SIX
Stacy is adjusting Neil's tie.

8. STACY: Like the best damn director that place will ever see.

9. NEIL: Thanks. I hope—

10. SFX: RRRRNG

11. NEIL: Oh. Hold on—

PAGE THREE – FOUR PANELS

PANEL ONE
Neil is on the phone.

1. NEIL: Neil Cutter.

2. NEIL: …

PANEL TWO
Neil is shocked as he gets the troll rampage news. Stacy looks up, wondering what's going on.

3. NEIL: **What**?

4. NEIL: I—I'm on my way out the door now.

PANEL THREE
Outside the house, Neil on the front lawn, just walking out the door.

5. NEIL: I'll be there in half an—

PANEL FOUR
Wide shot. A helicopter hovers above the lawn – emblazoned on it is the logo for the WESTFIELD PENAL PRESERVE. Neil is looking up, shielding his eyes.

6. NEIL: -- hour.

<u>PAGE FOUR – FIVE PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
Establishing shot, back at the troll. The highway is completely torn apart now. Men and women with heavy-duty rifles surround the troll, at a safe distance.

Helicopters circle overhead, and a few have landed on the other side of the fence. One – Neil's copter – is about to land.

PANEL TWO
At Neil's helicopter, Neil is hopping off. TREVOR, a floppy-haired guy in his late twenties, is helping him off.

1. NEIL: You're my zoologist, right? I'm sorry. I think it's a T name, but--

2. TREVOR: Trevor, sir.

3. NEIL: Trevor. Tell me what I'm looking at.

PANEL THREE
Trevor is gesticulating, trying to explain the situation.

4. TREVOR: One of our Trolls found a weakness in our fencing. Exploited it. And now… this.

PANEL FOUR
They're standing at the gaping hole in the fence. Trevor is looking out, curiously.

5. TREVOR: But it doesn't make any sense. This is Abby. She--she's never aggressive. One of our best.

6. TREVOR: And look. All this property damage, but--she's not harming anyone, not trying to leave.

PANEL FIVE
A two-shot of the Troll and one of the gun-toters. The Troll is snarling, her fists balled up in rage. She's staring down the gun-toter – a young woman named MEL. Mel looks terrified.

7. TREVOR (OP): Why escape, and then just… stop?

<u>PAGE FIVE – FIVE PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
Trevor has stepped through the fence, and is walking towards the highway. Behind him, Neil is going into "take control" mode.

1. NEIL: Okay, here's what we're gonna do. I want our—

PANEL TWO
Neil notices Trevor walking away – he looks confused.

2. NEIL: Trevor, what are you doing?

PANEL THREE
Trevor is walking past the circle of armed men and women.

PANEL FOUR
Trevor is standing right in front of the Troll, talking to her calmly.

3. TREVOR: What's going on, Abby? We both know this isn't like you, girl.

4. TREVOR: What are you trying to do?

PANEL FIVE
Abby SNARLS at Trevor -- big, menacing, threatening -- and raises one hand in the air, as if about to strike.

PAGE SIX – THREE PANELS

PANEL ONE
Part of Abby's head is BLOWN AWAY as she takes a direct hit to the skull.

PANEL TWO
On Trevor, screaming.

1. TREVOR: **NO!**

PANEL THREE
Abby staggers backwards, collapsing.

<u>PAGE SEVEN – FOUR PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
On Mel. A wisp of gunsmoke snakes up from her rifle. She looks absolutely horrified with herself.

PANEL TWO
Mel has turned away from us, as she throws up into the grass.

1. MEL: Hrrrk.

PANEL THREE
On Neil, staring out, simmering with anger at how his first day has gone.

PANEL FOUR
Abby, laid out on the highway, dead.

PAGE EIGHT – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE
Up in the mountains above the clearing. A young boy Troll – whom we'll just call TROLL – is looking down towards the clearing, in shock.

1. TROLL (small): <Mom.>

PANEL TWO
Wider. We still see Troll, and behind him, we see DRAGON and FAUN, both female. Dragon is deeply saddened by this turn of events. Faun, as always, is stoic.

PANEL THREE
Troll is crying. Dragon has a scaly hand on Troll's shoulder.

2. DRAGON: <I am so sorry.>

PANEL FOUR
On Faun, always the pragmatist.

3. FAUN: <As am I. And now we must keep moving.>

4. FAUN: <Your mother's sacrifice bought us some time before they notice we're missing.>

PANEL FIVE
We're back down in the clearing, where the shooting took place. Trevor is looking up at the mountains, scanning them. He's thinking about why Abby would to this, and slowly piecing things together.

5. FAUN: <But probably not much.>

PAGE NINE – SIX PANELS

PANEL ONE
Neil looks over at Trevor, who's still standing at the edge of everything, scanning the mountains.

PANEL TWO
Neil is walking up, speaking to Trevor. They're isolated enough to have a private conversation, and Neil looks like he's speaking in a quiet, impassioned voice (basically, I don't want to give the impression that he's dressing Trevor down in front of everyone; this talk would likely take place in an office, but it works much better here dramatically).

1. NEIL: Trevor. I need to talk to you.

PANEL THREE
Neil has his hand on Trevor's arm, now, speaking to him intently.

2. NEIL: I know you cared about this creature. And once the shock wears off, you're going to start feeling a lot of **guilt**. You're going to feel like this is all your fault.

PANEL FOUR
On Neil, intense but not angry.

3. NEIL: **Good**. Hold on to that feeling.

4. NEIL: The situation was contained. We were forming a plan to bring her in safely. And you threw that all away.

5. NEIL: The next time you decide to be a cowboy, you're fired.

PANEL FIVE
Trevor looks at Neil blankly. He really is in a bit of shock.

PANEL SIX
But when he speaks, he flat out ignores Neil's comments, instead focusing on practical matters:

6. TREVOR: We need to send the helicopters up. We need to search the woods.

<u>PAGE TEN – FIVE PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
Our creatures are racing through the woods – Faun and Troll running, Dragon flying close to the ground.

PANEL TWO
Troll looks back, his eyes wet with tears, thinking about his mother.

PANEL THREE
Troll falls to his knees on the forest floor.

PANEL FOUR
The Dragon has gone over, to comfort him.

1. DRAGON: <Simon. What your mother did for you was—>

2. SIMON: <It's not that.>

3. SIMON: <I'm so tired. I just… I just need to rest.>

PANEL FIVE
On Faun, angry.

4. FAUN: <We don't have time for that.>

PAGE ELEVEN – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE
Dragon looks over at the faun coldly. Faun is gesturing, “let’s PLEASE” get going. She looks desperate.

1. DRAGON: < We need to have some compassion, Kate.>

2. FAUN: <Then you can **carry** him.>

3. DRAGON: < I can’t. My **hollow bones--**>

4. FAUN: <Then we **leave** him, Willa!>

PANEL TWO
Faun is getting really frustrated now. Dragon remains steadfast.

5. DRAGON: <Go ahead. Venture forth, alone.>

6. FAUN: <Or stay here and be captured with the two of you. These are lovely choices.>

7. DRAGON: <We’re **not** going to be captured.>

8. FAUN: <You **just** said-->

PANEL THREE
On the Faun, as she weighs her options, tired of arguing.

PANEL FOUR
Faun speaks to the troll.

9. FAUN: <Alright, Simon.>

PANEL FIVE
Troll looks up, quizzically

10. FAUN (OP): <Climb on.>

<u>PAGE TWELVE – TWO PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
And we cut to a shot of the Faun running through the woods, with the Troll on her back. She’s straining with the effort. Troll isn’t riding the Faun so much as hanging on for dear life.

PANEL TWO
On Faun, as she looks back, shouting --

1. FAUN: <Just don’t get used to this!>

PAGE THIRTEEN – FOUR PANELS

PANEL ONE
Scene change. Neil and Trevor are walking quickly through the preserve.

1. TREVOR: What you have to understand is that these creatures are **interdependent**.

PANEL TWO
A little wider. As Neil and Trevor hustle by, we see them walking past a family of griffins (or some other creatures, if you'd rather draw something else).

2. TREVOR: It's been half a century since the war ended. Most of them were **born** in a penal preserve.

3. TREVOR: For them, this isn't just a prison – it's a **community**.

4. NEIL: Trevor, I've spent my entire career in the penal system. What part of this do you think I don't understand?

PANEL THREE
On Trevor, as he tries to explain.

5. TREVOR: What I'm **saying** is -- what Abby did, it doesn't make sense. She has friends. She has a son, who we're trying to track down.

6. TREVOR: No way she goes down like this without a damned good reason.

PANEL FOUR
A wide, establishing shot of the GOBLIN PIT. It's a huge circular pit, sunk deep into the ground, with a steel cage laid over it and concrete surrounding it (imagine a sunken barbecue pit, but huge and deep). Guards surround the pit at regular intervals. Neil and Trevor are walking across the edge of the concrete, on their way to elsewhere.

7. NEIL: Like a distraction. I get it.

8. NEIL: We'll know soon if any other creatures are missing.

PAGE FOURTEEN – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE
Neil is looking down at the cage.

1. NEIL: This is your goblin pit?

2. TREVOR: Yes, sir.

PANEL TWO
Down in the Goblin Pit. We're focused on one goblin, looking up, listening to Trevor and Neil. The humans don't give the Goblins names – just numbers – and this guy is FORTY-SEVEN (thought: maybe they're branded? It'd save us some exposition).

3. NEIL (OP): Have them count the goblins twice.

PANEL THREE
Forty-Seven is LEAPING up –

4. NEIL (OP): If any of these things escape, we're **really** screwed.

PANEL FOUR
Outside the pit – Forty-Seven SLAMS into the bottom of the cage, grabbing hold of it as he hits.

5. FORTY-SEVEN: Human!

PANEL FIVE
Neil STUMBLES backwards, shocked

<u>PAGE FIFTEEN – FIVE PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
Forty-Seven holds on to the bottom of the cage, holding himself up, snarling.

1. FORTY-SEVEN: You need to find someone? Goblins are the best trackers on land and sea.

PANEL TWO
Neil leans over, hands on his knees, both amused and horrified.

2. NEIL: Are you offering your **<u>help?</u>**

3. FORTY-SEVEN: Just telling you you'll **<u>need</u>** it.

PANEL THREE
Neil and Trevor start walking away. Over his shoulder, Neil says –

4. NEIL: That is **<u>never</u>** going to happen.

PANEL FOUR
On Forty-Seven, still hanging on the cage.

PANEL FIVE
A wicked smile is on Forty-Seven's face.

5. FORTY-SEVEN: We'll see.

PAGE SIXTEEN – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE
In the forest. Our creatures have settled in for the night, in a thick wooded area.

1. SIMON: <I’m cold. We should build a fire.>

PANEL TWO
On the Faun. She looks exhausted. She’s physically drained, and she’s so damned tired of arguing.

2. FAUN: <Absolutely not.>

3. FAUN: <They’re probably looking for us.>

PANEL THREE
The Dragon’s head is cocked up, towards the sky.

4. DRAGON: <Oh, they’re **definitely** looking for us. I’ve been hearing them all day, from miles and miles away.>

5. DRAGON: <**Smelling** them, too. The humans in their helicopters. Jet fuel and gunpowder and human flesh.>

6. DRAGON: <Don’t worry. We won’t be captured.>

PANEL FOUR
On Simon, looking worried at this revelation, but trying to comfort himself.

7. TROLL: <Of course not. We’re going to make it to Dragon Lake. We’ll be free.>

PANEL FIVE
The Faun scoffs at this.

8. FAUN: <Dragon Lake.>

9. FAUN: <“Where all creatures are free, and humans are nowhere to be seen.” You mother was the **only** full-grown creature I ever met who actually believed in it.>

<u>PAGE SEVENTEEN – FIVE PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
Troll looks over at Dragon.

1. TROLL: <Willa believes in it. Don’t you?>

2. DRAGON: <...>

3. DRAGON: <Sometimes it’s not about belief or doubt. Sometimes it’s about… being open to the possibility.>

4. DRAGON: <I very much want to have faith. And I think that’s enough for now.>

PANEL TWO
Troll turns to Faun, now, cross-examining her.

5. TROLL: <If you don’t believe in it, then why are you here?>

6. FAUN: <Because your mother asked for my help. I always had a hard time saying no to her.>

PANEL THREE
On Troll, thinking about this.

PANEL FOUR
We’ve pulled way out. It’s a dark night, lit only by the moon. From this range, the creatures look small and isolated, as they sit in the woods, gathered around the spot where a campfire should be.

7. TROLL: <If she were here, she would let me build a fire.>

<u>PAGE EIGHTEEN – FIVE PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
Later. Trevor and Neil are in a conference room with various other folks. On the video-conference screen is DIAZ, the 70-year-old Director of Homeland Security. He's a tough old bastard, and a veteran of the war against the fantasy creatures. A Donald Rumsfeld-type, but Hispanic.

1. NEIL: Yes, sir. Three creatures. A female dragon, a female faun, and a juvenile male troll.

2. NEIL: The son of our dead troll.

PANEL TWO
Diaz's expression sours at this.

3. DIAZ: A **<u>dragon</u>**. That's not great news.

PANEL THREE
Trevor leans forward, jumping in.

4. TREVOR: Actually, sir, the dragon's fire glands have been removed. It's standard procedure with all the dragons here at Westfield.

5. TREVOR: Physically, **<u>none</u>** of these creatures pose much of a threat. It's just a question of tracking them down.

PANEL FOUR
On Neil.

6. NEIL: And to that end, Director Diaz, we have two dozen search helicopters out there, as well as a search group on the ground.

7. NEIL: Believe me, sir, I didn't expect my first day on the job to include a late-night conference call with the Director of Homeland Security.

8. NEIL: We'll find them.

PANEL FIVE
Diaz starts to wrap up the meeting.

9. DIAZ: Good. Do it fast and do it quiet. The troll's death has already created a media spit-storm. If anything adds to that, I'm laying it at **<u>your</u>** doorstep.

PAGE NINETEEN – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE
Establishing shot of the woods, early the next morning. The sun is just rising. A lone helicopter flies across the sky.

PANEL TWO
Down on the ground. Faun and Dragon are still sleeping. Troll is awake, and is drawing in the dirt with a stick. Entertaining himself until the adults wake up.

1. SFX: THWWP THWWP THWWP THWWP

PANEL THREE
Troll looks up, responding to the sound of the helicopter.

2. TROLL: <Willa! Willa, wake up!>

PANEL FOUR
Faun and Dragon are coming awake. Faun is looking up at the sky. Troll looks terrified.

3. FAUN (whisper): <Shh! Simon, be quiet!>

4. FAUN (whisper): <If we stay still… they probably won't even notice us.>

5. DRAGON: <No...>

6. DRAGON: <They already have.>

PANEL FIVE
The Dragon FLIES up into the sky. The Faun is confused. What does Willa think she can do against a helicopter?

7. FAUN: Willa! What in the world do you think you're doing?

PAGE TWENTY – FIVE PANELS

PANEL ONE
Big panel. Dragon is flying straight towards the copter, shooting out a TWENTY-FOOT BALL OF FLAME at it.

PANEL TWO
On the helicopter pilot, eyes wide. We can see the flames reflected in his visor.

1. PILOT: Oh, Hell!

PANEL THREE
The helicopter is swooping out of the way, and the flames catch the tail end of it.

PANEL FOUR
Dragon starts to circle around for another attack.

PANEL FIVE
The pilot is on the radio, calling for help.

2. PILOT: Mayday! Mayday! We are under attack!

3. PILOT: The dragon is fire-capable. I repeat --

<u>PAGE TWENTY-ONE – FIVE PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
Dragon is taking another pass, shooting out flames at the copter. This one is hitting straight on.

PANEL TWO
A (disturbing but non-gory) shot of the helicopter pilot engulfed in flames, screaming.

1. PILOT: **<u>Ahhhh!</u>**

PANEL THREE
The helicopter is going down – headed straight for the ground.

PANEL FOUR
The Troll is crouched down in a ball, as the Faun stands over him, trying to protect him.

2. FAUN: Stay down, Simon!

PANEL FIVE
The helicopter crashes down in a fiery blaze.

<u>PAGE TWENTY-TWO – TWO PANELS</u>

PANEL ONE
On Faun and Troll, their eyes wide with shock.

1. DRAGON: I told you. I **<u>kept</u>** telling you.

2. DRAGON: Maybe now you'll finally **<u>believe</u>** me when I say…

PANEL TWO
Dragon looks over at them. Her eyes are bloodshot, and smoke is coming out of her nostrils. The helicopter crash is behind her.

3. DRAGON: We're **<u>not</u>** going to be captured.

<u>END</u>